

Preventing Eye Injuries



American Academy of Ophthalmology

Over one million people suffer eye injuries each year in the United States. Almost 50% of these accidents occur at home, and 90% of them could have been prevented.

Prevention is the first and most important step in avoiding eye injuries.

In the house

Everyday products can sometimes cause serious burns when they touch the eyes.

- Make sure that all spray nozzles are directed away from you before you pull the handle.
- Read instructions carefully before using cleaning fluids, detergents, ammonia or harsh chemicals. Wash your hands thoroughly after use.
- Use grease shields on frying pans to protect from spattering.
- Wear safety goggles to shield your eyes from fumes and splashes when using powerful chemicals.
- Use opaque goggles to avoid burns from sunlamps.

In the workshop

Many objects can fly into your eyes unexpectedly and cause an injury.

- Think about the work you will be doing, and protect your eyes from flying fragments, fumes, dust particles, sparks and splashing chemicals *before* you begin work.

- Read instructions thoroughly before using tools and chemicals and follow precautions for their use.
- Protect yourself by wearing safety glasses.

Around children

Toys and games can be dangerous when used incorrectly.

- Pay attention to your child's age and responsibility level when you buy toys and games. Avoid projectile toys such as darts, pellet guns, etc., which can hit the eye from a distance.
- Supervise children when they are playing with toys or games that can be dangerous.
- Teach children the correct way to handle items such as scissors and pencils.
- BB and pellet guns should be considered as dangerous as regular firearms.

In the garden

Garden tools and chemicals are the cause of many outdoor eye injuries.

- Keep everyone away when you use a lawnmower. Don't let anyone stand on the side or in front when you mow the lawn.
- Pick up rocks and stones before going over them with your lawnmower. Stones can shoot out of the rotary

blades, rebound off the curbs or walls and cause severe eye injuries. Wear safety glasses while mowing.

- Avoid low hanging branches.
- Make sure that pesticide spray-can nozzles are directed away from your face.
- Wear safety glasses while using powered weed trimmers. The nylon cord can break loose and hit the eye. Keep all safety guards in place and keep others at a safe distance.

Around the car

Sparks and fumes can ignite rapidly and explode. Battery acid can cause serious eye injuries.

- Put out all cigarettes and matches before opening the hood of the car. Use a flashlight — not a match or lighter — to look at the battery at night.
- Keep protective goggles with your jumper cables and wear them.
- Wear protective goggles for auto body repairs when grinding metal or striking metal against metal.

When you jump-start a car:

- Make sure the cars are not touching each other;
- Be sure the jumper cable clamps never touch each other;

- Never lean over the battery when attaching cables;
- Attach the positive cable (red) to the positive terminal of the dead battery first, then attach the other end of the positive cable to the good battery;
- Attach the negative terminal of the good battery, then attach the other end of the negative cable to a grounded area on the engine away from the negative terminal of the dead battery. Never attach a cable to the negative terminal of the dead battery.

In sports

Sports and recreational activities cause more than 31,000 eye injuries each year.

- Wear protective safety glasses, especially for sports such as tennis, racquetball, squash, baseball and basketball.
- Wear protective caps, helmets or face guards where appropriate, especially for sports such as ice hockey.

Around fireworks

- *All* fireworks can be dangerous to people of all ages.
- Never allow children to light fireworks.
- Do not stand near others when lighting fireworks.

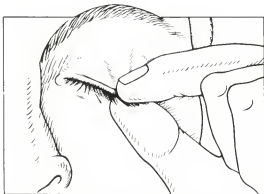
First aid for eye injuries

Correct treatment for an eye injury immediately following an accident can prevent loss of sight.

Specks in the eye

Do not rub your eye. Lift the upper lid over the lower lid allowing the lower lashes to brush the speck off the inside of the upper lid.

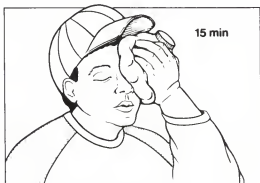
Blink a few times and let the eye move the particle out. If the speck remains, keep your eye closed and seek medical help.



Lift the upper lid over the lower lid.

Cuts of the eye and lid

Seek medical help immediately. Do not attempt to wash out the eye or remove an object stuck in the eye. Never apply pressure to the injured eye or eyelid. Be careful not to rub the eye.



Apply an ice-cold compress.

Blows to the eye

Immediately apply an ice compress to the eye to reduce pain and swelling. A black eye or blurred vision can be a sign of damage inside the eye. See your ophthalmologist immediately.

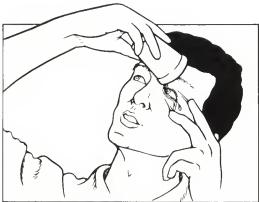
Chemical burns

Flood the eye with water immediately, using your fingers to keep the eye open as wide as possible.

Hold your head under a faucet or shower, or pour water gently into the eye from a container for at least fifteen minutes.

Roll the eyeball as much as possible to wash out the eye. Do not use an eye cup, or bandage the eye. Seek medical help immediately.

It is important to remember that first aid is immediate treatment that is given “first,” until experienced medical help is available.



Flood the eye with water.

Summary

When an accident involves the eye, you should get medical help immediately if there is pain or any question of eye or vision damage. Prompt, proper treatment of eye injuries can save vision. The most effective treatment for eye injuries is prevention.

Emergency phone numbers

Hospital

Ophthalmologist

Family physician

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is an organization of 20,000 ophthalmologists dedicated to preserving eye health and sight.



Valley Eye and Laser Center

4011 Talbot Rd. S., Suite 210
Renton, WA 98055



American Academy of Ophthalmology

P.O. Box 7424

San Francisco, CA 94120-7424

<http://www.eyenet.org>

Copyright© 1984

American Academy of Ophthalmology®

Printed in Canada

Revised 6/96

6/96